



April 12, 2005

Federal indictments charge six in bank robberies Project Bank Safe targets “note-jobs”

A federal grand jury in Providence has returned indictments charging six men with bank robbery. In each of the nine robberies charged in the indictments, a robber handed a teller a note demanding money.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente, Rhode Island Attorney General Patrick C. Lynch, Kenneth W. Kaiser, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Providence Police Chief Dean Esserman, Warwick Police Chief Stephen M. McCartney, Smithfield Police Chief William P. McGarry III, East Providence Police Chief Hubert Paquette, and Cranston Police Chief Stephen McGrath jointly announced five indictments, which the grand jury returned on April 6 in U.S. District Court, Providence.

The indictments are part of Project Bank Safe, a concerted effort by the U.S. Attorney’s Office, working in conjunction with the Attorney General’s Office, to prosecute so-called “note-jobs” federally.

“Traditionally, we have focused federal resources on robberies in which guns are used,” U.S. Attorney Corrente said. “This initiative addresses a recent spate of note-jobs by a small but active number of individuals. We will work with the Attorney General’s Office to ensure that each bank robbery is prosecuted wherever the prosecution can obtain the best result.”

Attorney General Lynch said, "Whether a robber uses a gun or hands the teller a note demanding money, the crime erodes the quality of life of our neighborhoods, which rely heavily

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on their community banks. Just as our office does with certain drug and gun cases, we look forward to working with our federal counterparts to prosecute these note-job cases to the fullest extent of the law."

In one indictment, **John Chielline**, 22, of 113 Sumner Street, Central Falls, and another individual are charged with conspiracy to rob banks and credit unions. They are also charged with committing two robberies together: one on February 2 at a Bank RI branch on South Broadway, East Providence, in which \$2,759 was taken, and one on February 5 at the Coastway Credit Union on Reservoir Avenue, Cranston, in which \$1,930 was taken. Chielline is charged alone with committing a robbery on January 31 at a Sovereign Bank branch on Newport Avenue, East Providence, in which \$720 was taken.

Charged in separate indictments, in unrelated bank robberies, are:

John Choiniere, 27, of 49 Nausauket Road, Warwick – a robbery of \$1,002 on February 3 at a Citizens Bank branch on Strawberry Field Road, Warwick;

William DeLuca, 45, of 320 State Street, Bristol – a robbery of \$1,026 on February 15 at a Sovereign Bank branch on Smith Street, Providence;

Charles M. Powell, 30, address unknown – two robberies, one of \$5,740 on March 9 at a Bank RI branch on Westminster Street, Providence, and one of \$2,675 on March 17 at the Washington Trust Company on Washington Street, Providence;

William J. Corvese, 37, of 705 Greenville Avenue, Johnston – two robberies, one on February 4 at a Citizens Bank branch on Putnam Pike, Smithfield, in which \$2,110 was taken, and one on February 6 at a Citizens branch on West River Street, Providence in which \$1,759 was taken.

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An indictment is merely an allegation and a defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty. The maximum penalty for bank robbery is 20 years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Chielline, DeLuca, Powell, and Corvese were already in state custody on state charges when the indictments were returned. They are scheduled to be arraigned in U.S. District Court on April 14. Agents arrested Choiniere on April 7. He pleaded not guilty before Magistrate Judge David L. Martin, who ordered him detained.

The **Federal Bureau of Investigation** and the **Providence, Warwick, Smithfield, East Providence, and Cranston** police departments investigated the robberies. Assistant U.S. Attorney James H. Leavey is prosecuting the cases.

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